STANDARD FORM NO. 64

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Dan Ellsberg DATE: 1 August 1966

FROM : Frank Scotton

SUBJECT: Your request on concepts

REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT VIET NAM

CONCEPTS AND PHILOSOPHY

Revolution, perhaps directed by representatives of privileged classes with a sense of nobless oblige, is necessitated by inequalities within the society and energized by the less privileged. Revolution proceeds from the bottom to the top and destroys what will not yield. Reform as distinguished from revolution, is invariably directed by representatives of the privileged classes, access to power being the critical privilege no matter how acquired. Reform must proceed from top to bottom destroying what will not yield. The reform of subordinate elements or less privileged elements is not possible until the primal elements and privileged classes have reformed themselves. When reform is necessary and denied the pre-conditions for revolution are established: need for change, determination to achieve change, and intense resentment of those who frustrate the desire.

The Revolutionary Development program which Americans talk about in Viet Nam, and which Vietnamese call Rural Construction, is not revolution at all. We should disabuse ourselves of the illusion of a term which

has acquired great mystique and little understanding in official circles. When we say Revolutionary Development we are meaning a program of sponsored reform. Ironically, the failure to recognize the program for what it is and the resulting lack of insistance and pressure for absolute reform may be the first link in a final drive for real revolution led and directed by the only alternative: the People's Liberation Front. So by failing to understand what it is we are really about, we assist those forces which we most want to defeat! Rectification of terms is an indespensible aid to clear thinking. Therefore, let us use Reform and Rural Construction for the purposes of this discussion.

What is necessary for a program of successful reform? A revolutionary group which is led by imposing leadership must have cadre committed to the ideology of the leadership. The cadre inspire and direct the activity of activists and sympathizers who inspire and act upon the masses. For a reform group which is led by imposing leadership, cadre committed to a particular ideology are not absolutely necessary. Activists who are motivated by and directed by the leadership are an absolute need. Both leaders and activists are critical to reform movements. The intense commitment to reform and implementation of reform is the bond between leaders and activists. Whereas cadre are limited in numbers to retain ideological purity, activists are numerous and broadly based in the population. The feature of a cadre life is discipline to doctrine, the feature of activist life is concern. Because of the favorable connotation of the word

in Viet Nam cadre has been erroneously used to describe the representatives of the government in general and the Vung Tau trained Rural Construction team members in particular. Therefore, let us call these people team members remembering that at best we mean this in an activist sense.

To be successful the reform group must have imposing inspirational leadership and numerous broadly based activists. Both levels must be united by real commitment to the goals of the reform movement. How much more true this is for an arena in which the reform movement is competing against a revolutionary group as well as the reactionary elements!

To what extent do our considerations apply in Viet Nam? Activists are being trained and supported materially by government leadership. These activists are broadly based and in general are concerned with the plight of the masses and the future of the nation. The critical question for Viet Nam and those who seek to help Viet Nam revolves around the question of leadership for reform.

Points:

1. The leadership must have imagination sufficient to demonstrate to the activists that they the leaders are reformers.
2. The leadership essentially fills in many respects the role played by cadre in a revolutionary movement. The leadership must sacrifice conspicuously.

3. Reform must proceed at all levels of responsibility simultaneously, otherwise there will be a vicious morale problem for the activists.

4. Those who resist reform or prostitute standards must be removed.